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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/20/2017

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SUBJECT: CHAVEZ VISITS IRAN: THE FOURTH TIME IN TWO YEARS

REF: A. CARACAS 694

[1](#)B. CARACAS 01361

[1](#)C. CARACAS 1937

Classified By: Economic Counselor Andrew N. Bowen for Reason 1.4 (D)

[1](#)1. (C) On November 19, President Chavez visited Tehran for the fourth time since 2005 and the sixth time since 1998. During the five-hour stop-over, Chavez and his entourage of five ministers and the mayor of Caracas met with President Ahmadinejad and Iranian officials. According to media reports and the publicly available transcript of the event, the BRV and GOI signed four cooperation agreements promising to produce industrial molds, set up formal links between energy ministries, create a Venezuelan - Iran binational investment fund, and establish a binational bank. Chavez said he believed other countries would eventually join the binational bank and the binational investment fund would promote development in Venezuela, Iran, and third countries. Chavez declared that with the addition of the new agreements, Venezuela and Iran have signed 186 agreements, signaling a "solid strategic alliance," valued at approximately USD 4.6 billion. (Note: In early March, the Iranian Embassy in Caracas told reporters that the then 169 agreements were worth USD 17 billion (Ref A). End Note.)

[1](#)2. (SBU) During the short visit, Chavez and Ahmadinejad blasted the United States and denounced "U.S. imperialism." At the signing ceremony, Chavez picked up where Ahmadinejad and he left off at the OPEC Summit, predicting, "soon we will not speak of dollars, the imperial dollar will sink, and with it, will sink the empire of the United States." He added, "we must pray that God helps us accelerate the end to the deviant United States empire." Chavez added that he rejected threats from the U.S. "empire," and said Iran had the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In response, Ahmadinejad said, "we are two brother countries that have common ideals," and added, "we have common plans and programs to improve local and international security with the purpose of promoting peace." The BRV-run Bolivarian News Agency also reported Chavez saying, "we are ready to confront North American imperialism in whatever territory and defeat it. We are already defeating it and we will defeat it. We don't want war but we are prepared to be free." News of the visit was widely reported in the local media.

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